

April 9, 2025

Dear Honorable Claudia Wilken,

Re: College Athlete NIL Litigation, Case No. 4:20-cv-03919)

Thank you so much for being a voice of reason in what feels like such an uncertain time—for us as parents, and especially for the athletes whose futures are impacted. I'll keep my message brief, as I'm sure the heart of what you are reading—again and again—remains the same.

Joshua M. Jones is my student-athlete. He's now a redshirt freshman football player at Virginia Tech. He came to football later than most, starting in his junior year of high school, but worked twice as hard to make up for lost time. We immersed ourselves in everything we could possibly learn about recruiting in a condensed window—Twitter contact rules, open and dead periods, eligibility requirements—you name it. Had roster limit considerations been something to learn, I would have. But it never was.

Joshua was fortunate to receive four full scholarship offers, but the fifth offer came as a Preferred Walk-On (PWO) to Virginia Tech. As a family, we *all* knew this was the place for him. It was the coaches who made us feel like family, the beautiful campus that felt like home, the stadium and fan base that live and breathe this sport, the top-notch education, and the opportunity to major in Communications/Sports Media and Analytics—just as Joshua had hoped.

We could have insisted he go where he was offered a scholarship, but instead we chose the dream. We chose the incredible coaches who don't just coach players but help develop young men. We chose the harder path to prove himself, and we made the sacrifice willingly. We thought long and hard before making this decision. The recruiting process takes careful thought, planning, and sacrifice. Choosing to send Joshua to Tech as a PWO was not a decision made lightly. We were given assurance that he had a spot on the team and an opportunity to earn a scholarship. We've done without to cover his tuition—nearly \$40,000 invested—just to give our son this chance.

And Joshua has done his part.

He's been an outstanding student, volunteered in the local community, and been an incredible teammate—encouraging others even when it meant not being recognized or traveling with the team. He arrives to meetings and practice early, shows up consistently with a positive attitude, and is respectful and engaged with coaches, staff, equipment managers, and cafeteria workers. He embodies what it means to be grateful for the opportunity.

But unlike scholarship players, he walks a tighter line—knowing he cannot slip up, fearing the possibility that the new roster limit might be the reason he's cut, no matter how hard he works.

The possibility of reducing roster size was never something we were made aware of. Had we known that leaving his dream school might become a reality because of it, we might have made a different decision. But now, Joshua is not only a better athlete—he is deeply woven into the fabric of Virginia Tech and has grown tremendously as a person. We don't want to see our Hokie punished because of an arbitrary NCAA rule change.

As a family, we humbly ask that you remain steadfast in your position to allow current student-athletes to be grandfathered in. It's a big ask, but it would mean the world to those whom the NCAA has said are "not many." One of those "not many" is my son—and each one of the others feels this deeply, too.

At the very least, grandfathering would allow families like ours the dignity of time—to process, prepare, and not be forced into a rushed pivot over something as precious as our children's futures. We humbly ask that the settlement NOT be approved UNLESS there is a grandfather provision.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, Judge Wilken for asking the attorneys to consider this.

Warm regards,

Gillian Jones

24656 Cable Mill Terrace
Aldie, VA 20105

Mom to Joshua Jones, PWO at Virginia Tech Football, Class of 2028 | NCAA ID: 2106211537
703.309.1616